

Dee Hill Cemetery

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Oak Hill Cemetery

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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OAK HILL CEMETERY

Thirtieth and R Streets NW. Burleigh-Glover Park or Potomac Park busses. Taxi, second zone.

Open daily, 7 a. m. to 5 p. m.; Sundays and national holidays 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. Autos not admitted.

IN THE northeast corner of Georgetown, on the western bank of Rock Creek, just above Dumbarton Bridge, lies Oak Hill Cemetery, so named for the tall oaks studding its ground. The 25-acre tract rolls picturesquely across four plateaus, separated by terraced ravines, to drop almost to the creek level. At the entrance gate on R Street, a mellowed yellow brick building serves as superintendent's lodge and office. Due east stands the quaint Gothic chapel designed by James Renwick, around which are grouped the many memorials to Americans of nation-wide reputation who make this cemetery of particular interest.

When William Wilson Corcoran, financier and philanthropist, purchased the original 12½-acre site in 1848 and founded the cemetery, he made definite provision for retaining its woodlands. The present

informal landscaping is in conformity with plans made at that time by George F. de la Roche. Eleanor, daughter of Elizabeth and George Corbin Washington, from whom the cemetery lands had been acquired, was the first person buried there, on April 12, 1849.

Monuments. North of the lodge stands a monument to the Right Reverend William Pinkney, a nephew and namesake of William Pinkney, statesman and jurist. The life-size statue, erected by his devoted friend, W. W. Corcoran, portrays the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Maryland in full canonical robes.

Between the lodge and chapel lies the grave of John Howard Payne, its identifying monument and bust standing in a clearing of lawn. For 11 years Payne was United States consul at Tunis, where he died and was buried in 1852. Thirty years later Corcoran, personal friend of Payne, had the body brought to this country and interred at Oak Hill, that the author of *Home, Sweet Home* might rest in his native land. The original flat tombstone, the gift of the city and Kingdom of Tunis, lies nearby. This group occupies the first plateau, which on its northeast slope holds, among others, the memorial stone to the Rev. Stephen Balch, militant pastor of the Old Presbyterian Church for 53 years, who drilled the boys of Georgetown and led them in the battle of Bladensburg. On the north side a flight of steps leads down to the grave of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, once a popular novelist. Around the terrace curve to the east stands a shaft of granite to commemorate Alexander de Bodisco, Russian Ambassador to the United States for 17 years. This elderly baron's romance and marriage with a 16-year-old school-girl has gone down in Georgetown history.

This first plateau is one of three which curve to the southeast. A fourth plateau lies to the north. On it is being built a circular Greek temple of white marble (an exact duplicate of one formerly on this site), the tomb of William Wilson Corcoran (1798-1888), founder of the Corcoran Gallery of Art and benefactor of other institutions to which he contributed millions of dollars.

West of the Corcoran tomb stands an octagonal shaft erected in memory of the Hon. John H. Eaton (1790-1856), Secretary of War under Jackson and Minister to Spain. Beside him lies his wife, Peggy O'Neale, the tavern-keeper's daughter whose romantic and spectacular career divided Washington society. There is no reference to her interment, except indirectly, on the stone she erected to her daughter and granddaughter.

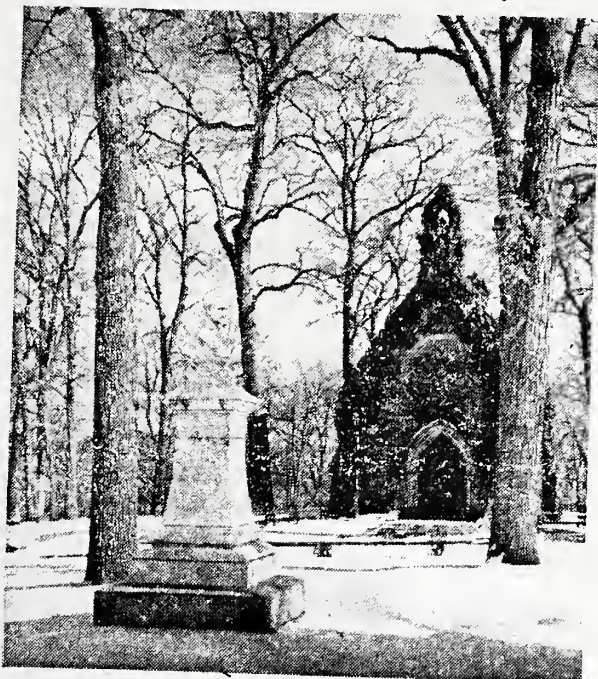
On the second plateau, east of the chapel, a white granite obelisk marks the grave of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War during Lincoln's administration. Northeast of it rises a Celtic cross above the simple headstone marking the grave of James G. Blaine, Secretary of State under Benjamin Harrison.

In a hollow to the east, at the crossways of several paths, is the grave of John A. Joyce, remembered for his famous lines, "Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone." The monument and bronze bust by Jerome Connor were erected before the poet's death, Joyce himself writing the inscription and posing for his photograph beside the bust.

Still farther east on the edge of the third plateau stands a square granite block dedicated to Joseph Henry, first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. To the southeast a monument, a broken mast with draped sails, marks the grave of Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey, U. S. N.

On the easternmost heights stands the Van Ness Mansoleum, designed by George Hadfield, architect of the old City Hall, after the Temple of Vesta at Rome. Beneath it lies the body of the heiress, Marcia Burnes Van Ness, principal founder of the Church of the Ascension. With her lie her husband, Gen. John Peter Van Ness, and their daughter, Ann Van Ness Middleton.

Oak Hill Cemetery



Photograph by Earl Goldstein

Oak Hill Cemetery Georgetown

A visitor to Georgetown seeing Oak Hill Cemetery for the first time was once heard to say: "Here I could rest in peace. This is the happiest cemetery I have ever seen."

A strange word to apply to a cemetery, but perhaps even today, when Oak Hill is in its 114th year as a public burial ground, there is some echo of the light-heartedness of the Fourth of July revelries which would take place there each year. For the original 12 acres-part of Parrott's Woods--which W. W. Corcoran gave to the Oak Hill Cemetery Company on the enactment by Congress of its charter in 1849, had always by common consent been dedicated to the "Glorious Fourth."

Oak Hill Cemetery is on the highest point of Georgetown, 176 feet above sea level. Though George F. de la Roche laid plans for the cemetery--and there is a map of 1851 to show the improvements the Board approved and sanctioned--the feeling is that the cemetery "belongs" and grew naturally along the terraces and slopes leading down to Rock Creek. De la Roche in his map named the paths with simple whimsy: Primrose, Crocus, Violet, Piony (sic), Lily, Pink, Snowdrop, Myrtle, Honeysuckle

and Carnation.

Few Washingtonians apart from those whose families are lot holders are really aware of Oak Hill. A fleeting glimpse of the main entrance on R Street, with the Victorian gatehouse, is perhaps the most that passers-by can catch. But with the notables buried there is buried a good piece of Georgetown history.

In front of the lovely Gothic chapel is the memorial to John Howard Payne, composer of "Home, Sweet Home," and set in the ground at the edge of a circle of lawn is a marble tablet, a gift from Tunis where Payne, one of America's most homesick men, died after a long illness. Payne, who at the time of his death was American consul in Tunis, was buried in St. George's Protestant cemetery. And he lay in foreign soil for 30 years before the peripatetic W. W. Corcoran, who in his travels must have known what loneliness meant, brought back the body to Oak Hill in 1883.

On the anniversary of Payne's death in April visitors to the cemetery mass his grave with flowers and read the epitaph: Sure, when the gentle spirit fled

To realms beyond the azure dome,

With arms outstretched God's

Tourist Guide To Georgetown

* * only stars indicate places open to public.

Dumbarton Oaks, 31st and R Streets--Collection of Byzantine art and extensive gardens. Temporarily closed.

Dumbarton House, 2715 Q Street--Home of the National Society of Colonial Dames.*

Evermay, 1623 28th Street--Built in 1792 by Samuel Davidson

Oak Hill Cemetery--Burial place of John Howard Payne and other distinguished citizens.*

Tudor Place, 1644 31st Street--A fine example of the Federal style, designed by Dr. William Thornton.

Sevier Place, 3124 Q Street--Built in 1800; connections with the Bowie and Sevier families.

Bodisco House, 3314 O Street--Former Russian Embassy and home of Baron Bodisco

Christ Church, 31st and O Street--Built in 1818; memorial window given by W. W. Corcoran*

Saint John's Church, Potomac and O Streets--Built in 1794; stone commemorating Ninian Beall; Francis Scott Key was a vestryman.*

Decatur House, 2812 N Street--Home of the widow of Commodore Decatur after his death in a duel.

Old Stone House, 3051 M Street--Pre-Revolutionary house, now restored and open to the public.*

C & O Canal and Towpath--between M and K Streets in Georgetown.*

shaft of granite marks the Senator's grave; two smaller headstones for a daughter and a granddaughter are on the other side. But though the idle tongues have been still since her death in 1879, when all Washington turned out for the funeral, and the Chief of Police was a pallbearers with Senators and Cabinet members, no effort has ever been made to place a headstone for Major William O'Neale's pretty daughter.

Edwin M. Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War, who said as he stood at the President's deathbed: "Now he belongs to the Ages," is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery. The list of the distinguished



WILLIE LINCOLN, THIRD SON OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN
DIED FEBRUARY 20, 1862, AT THE AGE OF 12.
From a photograph taken by Brady at Washington, shortly
before the death of Willie Lincoln.

I was named after
"Willie Lincoln" the son
of Abraham Lincoln -

WILLIAM LINCOLN PALMER

GENEALOGIST

TEL. UNIVERSITY 6634-W

SUITE 389, 988 MEMORIAL DRIVE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



MAY • 63 •

Inside the small Chapel (taken facing east)
The carpet on the floor hides the 4 trap doors to
the 4 shallow vaults (under the floor)

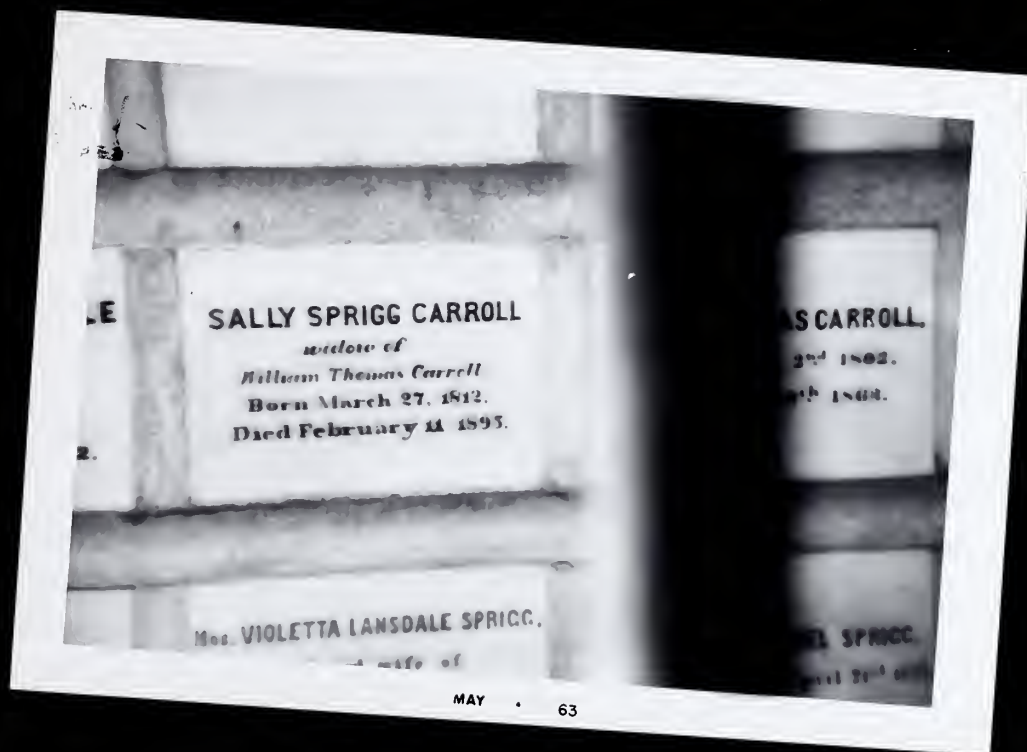
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MAY • 63 •

"Looking north, but was taken inside the fence".

(Chapel where Lincoln went the day young Willie
was placed in a vault in the floor of the Chapel)



Ms. VIOLETTA LANSDALE SPRIGG.

Inside of Williar. Thomas Carroll vault.



MAY • 63

Looking at the rear of the Chapel, facing west, "R"
Street is on my left.

(Chapel where Lincoln went the day young Willie was
placed in a vault in the floor of the Chapel)



MAY • 63

"R" Street entrance to Oak Hill

3

MAY • 63



Inside the small Chapel (taken
facing east)

The carpet on the floor hides the
4 trap doors to the 4 shallow vaults
(under the floor)

b2



MAY • 63

Looking south, the entrance to the Chapel is on the right (Notice th "R" street residence in lower left)

(Chapel where Lincoln went the day young Willie was placed in a vault in the floor of the Chapel)

MAY . 63 .



Stanton's Grave

lower right Yannie's Grave, Stanton's
youngster

18



MAY

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63

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(Poorly lighted, too much deep shade, or cheap camera, or poor photography talent")

(Chapel where Lincoln went the day young Willie was placed in a vault in the floor of the Chapel)

W

MAY • 63 •



Stanton's Grave

shows the relative juxtaposition
of Stanton's grave to fence corner
that is Stanton's grave to left of
tree.

B 159





MAY • 63

Stanton's Grave

inside the heavy iron fence, looking
north, at the main face of the
Stanton Grave monument
Her grave at 30th & R Street N.W.
is "just inside" the fence



MAY • 63 •



The William Thomas Carroll vault.

7/11

